

INL News Release
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20th annual symposium promotes education, offers scholarships for Latino teens

This weekend, 300 Idaho Latino high school students will converge in Sun Valley and be immersed in an annual academic retreat that offers hope, motivation and a chance at college scholarships. Now in its 20th year, the Hispanic Youth Symposium, April 24-26, will continue its quest to encourage the teens to seek brighter futures for themselves and their families by staying in school.

For two decades, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) has hosted the Hispanic Youth Symposium along with the U.S. Department of Energy, federal management contractors, Gem State Diversity Initiatives, state agencies, Hispanic organizations and private employers who help sponsor the event.

This year, about 100 students are coming from the Upper Snake River Plain, about 95 from the Magic Valley and about 85 from the Treasure Valley. Several others will come from other parts of the state. The symposium aims to mentor students, help curb the high school drop-out rate, build pride in Latino culture/history and encourage students to pursue higher education.

The comprehensive weekend gives teens the opportunity to listen to motivational speakers, participate in problem-solving workshops, examine possible career paths and compete in speech, talent and interactive skills competitions. Colleges and universities from Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah and Montana will participate and award scholarships worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This year's symposium will feature several HYS alumni, who are returning to share their stories of academic pursuit, career successes and the impact the symposium has had on their lives. Keynote speaker for several symposium sessions will be Ruben Gonzales – three-time Olympian in the luge, motivational speaker and best-selling author.

Participating high schools select students to attend from those who have applied by writing an essay explaining how the symposium will help them realize their goals for the future.

The Hispanic Youth Symposium grew out of a 1988 brainstorming session on curbing the 60+ percent dropout rate for Latino teens in Idaho. Since then, over 4,500 students have attended, and scholarships valued at more than \$5 million have been awarded. The dropout rate for Latino teens in Idaho has decreased, but remains the highest of any ethnic group in the state.

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[Visit the Hispanic Youth Symposium Web site.](#)

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